

As
concluded

reflectance, vehicle lights activation, and vehicle intruder alarms. Preferably, the imaging device comprises a single chip camera disposed adjacent the vehicle rearview mirror. ~~MM~~

IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly cancel Claims 1-92, without prejudice.

Kindly add new Claims 93-112, as follows:

Sub B'17

comprising:

an imaging device for capturing an image of a front seat of the vehicle and outputting image data corresponding thereto; and

a processor which (i) receives the image data output from the imaging device, (ii) compares the received image data with stored image data, and (iii) outputs a vehicle equipment control signal based on the comparison.

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94. Apparatus according to Claim 93, wherein said imaging device comprises a single chip camera.

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~~95.~~ Apparatus according to Claim ²~~94~~, wherein said camera is disposed adjacent a vehicle rearview mirror.

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~~96.~~ Apparatus according to Claim ¹~~93~~, wherein the output signal comprises an airbag inhibit signal.

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~~97.~~ Apparatus according to Claim ¹~~93~~, wherein the output signal comprises a mirror reflectance control signal.

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~~98.~~ Apparatus according to Claim ¹~~93~~, wherein the output signal comprises a vehicle lights control signal.

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~~99.~~ Apparatus according to Claim ¹~~93~~, wherein the output signal comprises a vehicle intruder control signal.

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100. Apparatus for controlling activation of an airbag in a vehicle, comprising:
an imaging device disposed in a front portion of a vehicle compartment for imaging a front seat of said vehicle compartment and outputting image information corresponding to occupancy of the vehicle front seat; and

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cont.

a processor which (i) receives the image information from the imaging device, (ii) compares the received image information with stored image information corresponding to the vehicle front seat, and (iii) outputs an inhibit signal inhibiting activation of the airbag when the comparison determines the occupancy of the vehicle front seat is within a predetermined class.

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~~101~~. Apparatus according to Claim ⁸~~100~~, wherein the imaging device comprises a single chip camera disposed adjacent a vehicle rearview mirror.

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~~102~~. Apparatus according to Claim ⁸~~100~~, wherein the processor outputs the inhibit signal when the comparison determines that a child occupies the vehicle front seat.

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~~103~~. Apparatus according to Claim ⁸~~100~~, wherein the processor outputs the inhibit signal when the comparison determines that a child restraint system occupies the vehicle front seat.

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~~104~~. Apparatus according to Claim ⁸~~100~~, wherein the processor outputs the inhibit signal when the comparison determines that a vehicle front passenger seat is empty.

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~~105~~. Apparatus according to Claim ⁸~~100~~, wherein the processor outputs an airbag enable signal when the comparison determines that an occupant of the front seat is not wearing a seat belt.

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~~106~~. Apparatus according to Claim ⁸~~100~~, wherein said inhibit signal prevents deployment of the airbag.

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~~107~~. Apparatus according to Claim ⁸~~100~~, wherein said inhibit signal controls the rate at which the airbag deploys.

108. A method for controlling activation vehicle equipment, comprising the steps of:
capturing an image of a front seat of the vehicle;
outputting image frame data corresponding to the captured image of the front seat;

comparing the output image frame data with stored image frame data corresponding to the vehicle front seat; and outputting a vehicle equipment control signal based on the results of the comparing step.

109. A method according to Claim 108, wherein the outputting step comprises the step of outputting an airbag inhibit signal when the comparing step determines that a child occupies the vehicle front seat.

110. A method according to Claim 108, wherein the outputting step comprises the step of outputting an airbag inhibit signal when the comparing step determines that a vehicle front passenger seat is empty.

111. A method according to Claim 108, wherein the outputting step comprises the step of outputting in airbag inhibit signal when the comparing step determines that a child vehicle restraint system occupies the vehicle front seat.

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